DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 442 175 EA 030 421

AUTHOR Gladstone, Brenda; Jacobsen, D. Michele
TITLE A Report on Educational Partnerships in Rocky View School Division.
PUB DATE 1999-01-00
NOTE 13p.; A condensed version of this report was published as an article in January 1999 by the International Electronic Journal of Leadership in Learning.
AVAILABLE FROM For condensed version: http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~iejll.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cooperative Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Partnerships in Education; Public Schools; *School Business Relationship; School Community Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Rocky View School Division Number 41 AB

ABSTRACT

Educational partnerships are an important strategy for increasing the authenticity and value of school for future citizens. In addition to the financial benefits that school-business partnerships bring to schools, there are a variety of teaching and learning benefits of making links with the community. This report outlines reasons why schools, businesses, industry, and other agencies should actively pursue educational partnerships, shares examples of successful and valuable educational partnerships, and concludes with an examination of some issues and concerns. The educational partnerships that have contributed to the success of the Galileo Center at banded Peak School in Bragg Creek, Alberta, are also examined. Educators and business representatives should discuss the variety of activities in which they will participate, as well as the mutual benefits of their collaboration. Some examples of partnership activities and school-to-work transition programs that potential partners may be interested in pursuing for mutual benefit include the following: (1) shared computer-based projects; (2) reading and math programs; (3) technical training; (4) guest speakers; (5) displaying and publishing student work; (6) extracurricular connections, and (7) educator and employee workshops. (Contains 24 references.) (DFR)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 442 175

EA

A Report on Educational Partnerships in Rocky View School Division

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Brenda Gladstone
Galileo Educational Network Association

M. Jacobsen

D. Michele Jacobsen
University of Calgary

Abstract: Educational Partnerships are an important strategy for increasing the authenticity and value of school for our future citizens. In addition to the financial benefits that business-school partnerships often bring to schools, there are a variety of teaching and learning benefits of making links with the community at large. This report outlines a number of reasons why schools, business, industry, and other agencies in the community should actively pursue educational partnerships, shares examples of successful and valuable educational partnerships in Rocky View School Division, and concludes with an examination of some issues and concerns. In a second report we examine in detail the educational partnerships that have contributed to the success of the Galileo Centre at Banded Peak School in Bragg Creek, Alberta.

Introduction

Educational partnerships are an important strategy for increasing the authenticity and value of school for our future citizens. Alberta's provincial education system benefits greatly from the many contributions and donations from private industry. However, rather than limiting attention to the financial benefits that businesses can offer schools, it is important to share information about the mutually inclusive teaching and learning benefits that educational partnerships offer to students, schools, businesses, and the community at large. Educational partnerships, in the form of business-school partnerships, promote civic responsibility and good citizenship, leadership and volunteer opportunities, and increase social contacts for our students with diverse members of their community, including senior citizens, artists, musicians, business people, university professors, and government employees. Our approach to sharing the story of educational partnerships in Rocky View School Division will be to first discuss the many reasons why schools and businesses should actively pursue business-school partnerships. The second part of this paper describes how we choose to define and establish school-business partnerships, lists some activities in which schools and businesses can chose to participate, and reports on examples of successful educational partnerships in Rocky View schools. Although there are some issues and concerns to be addressed, our position is that educational partnerships are of benefit to us all.

Why Educational Partnerships?

Educational partnerships enable us to start early with children on the lifelong process of managing one's own learning and work. Alberta Education, the educational ministry for the provincial government, believes that all students should have access to effective career education and counseling at an early age in order to choose career directions and prepare for their post-high school life (Alberta Education, 1996a). Career education can be delivered in a variety of ways, and approaches should involve close cooperation among parents, students, schools and employers (Alberta Education, 1996a). DeBruyn, Kremer, Orth, Rickabaugh, Winters, Wright, and Yunk (1996) worry because American schools often delay learning opportunities related to careers until students are in high school or, at least, middle school, because their research on career development shows that students often begin to develop lifelong interests that expand to include career choices while in the elementary grades. DeBruyn, et al., (1996) believe that if educators and parents want children to choose a career from the widest array of choices

EA030421

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

possible, it is important that schools begin to offer career-related experiences early in order to help students understand the connection between their interests and talents and their choice of careers. The longer schools wait to provide these experiences, the fewer choices students are likely to consider and the more likely their choice will be a matter of chance rather than careful and informed consideration (DeBruyn, et al., 1996). Children start dreaming about what they want to be when they grow up when they are in kindergarten. Educational partnerships are a proactive step towards helping children to turn their dreams and hopes into reality.

Educational researchers agree there is a pressing need to evaluate the school's role in educating future citizens (Goodlad, & McMannon, 1997). How often have you heard a student ask, "Why do we have to learn this stuff?" The legitimacy and relevancy of school, with its fixed curricula, is being increasingly questioned by students and the public. The following information, from the Environics Research Group's 1996 Focus Canada Report, suggests that Albertans may be losing confidence in the school system's ability to adequately prepare our students either for work or post-secondary schooling (Table 1).

Table 1. The percentage of Albertans who agree that high school graduates are ready for the workplace or post-secondary education.

Survey Group	Prepared for Workforce	Prepared for Post-secondary Education
High School Students	80%	87%
Public Parents	40%	63%
Post-secondary instructors	35%	53%
Employers	35%	70%

Students appear to be confident they are adequately prepared for work and or for post-secondary education. However, in the opinion of parents, instructors, and employers, while students may be somewhat better prepared for post-secondary education than they are for work, their perceptions of students' readiness for post-high school work or further learning show a lack of confidence. Some may choose to counter this suggestion using Statistics Canada (1998) data on education that shows that the proportion of Canadian individuals fifteen years and older who have less than a high school diploma has dropped from 29.4% in 1981 to 18.2% in 1996. However, these figures beg the question of whether more students are getting diplomas because school is truly relevant to them, or if students are staying in school because the job market is tenuous without a diploma. In order to counter suggestions that schools are merely diploma granting institutions, educators of our future citizens and leaders need to be proactive in examining "what is school good for, anyway?". Educational partnerships are one strategy for bringing positive and rich additions to the teaching and learning experience offered to students in school.

Many educators see the central purpose of public school as preparation for university or college. Information from Statistics Canada (1998) reveals that the proportion of Canadian men and women aged 20 to 29 who complete university or non-university post-secondary programs is rising (i.e., an increase from 36.6% women and 37.1% men in 1981 to 50.6% women and 42.1% men in 1996). At first glance, the post-secondary graduation rates seem very encouraging, especially for women. However, we must examine what formal schooling is doing for the majority of students who do not go on to graduate from a post-secondary institution. We must also examine whether we provide relevant career exposure for those that choose a post-secondary route in order to guide course and program selection, as well as to ease their eventual entry into the work force (see Statistics Canada, 1998).

Statistics Canada (1998) provides evidence that a majority of our students enter the labor force directly after high school. Levin (1995) suggests that preparation for work has long been one of the central functions of Canadian schools. Although educators may not necessarily agree, Levin's (1995) surveys of public opinion show that parents consistently rank preparation for work as an important function for schools. The ability to get a good job is even more important for students, who often see this as the paramount purpose for their schooling. Levin (1995) suggests that schools have a responsibility to address the changing nature of work in Canada in order to increase public confidence in the relevancy of school. He believes that the changing labor market in Canada has important consequences for schools, and that if present labor trends and fluctuations continue, the legitimacy of school will increasingly be questioned by the public unless there are linkages with work. By seeing work as one of the important things people need to learn about, by reexamining teaching and learning practices, by working more

closely with the community, and by seeing themselves as one part of a larger process, schools may be able to find a meaningful and positive role for themselves in helping students learn about work (Levin, 1995).

Alberta Education (1996b) has worked hard to enhance and strengthen its ties with business, industry, volunteer, and other agencies in the community to meets the needs of students who will make either a school-to-work, or a school-to-post-secondary, transition. The following is an excerpt from Alberta Education's policy on off-campus education and services:

> "Since most school staff are more familiar with the professions, career opportunities in the trade, service and technical areas may not receive the same emphasis in career education and counseling activities. This may result in a large number of students taking university preparation programs in high school. When they do not go to university, these students often *default* into the workplace with little preparation for any job. As we move into the *information age*, the *knowledge worker* will be in high demand. All workers, regardless of their career, will require high level employability skills. Students should have the support of parents, educators, government and business in giving them the opportunity to be the very best in any career they choose" (Policy 1.4.3).

It is important to focus our attention on Alberta Education's vision of preparing students for "*any* career students choose". Whether a student has a predisposition for fine arts, or an interest in carpentry, cooking, or physics, educators have an obligation to provide the best educational experience possible for every individual. Educational partnerships can enrich the diversity, breadth, and relevancy of our provincial curricula for *all* students by bringing the world of work into the classroom, and moving the classroom into the world of work.

In order to assess their success in preparing students for their future roles in society, schools must also measure whether students can actually apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems and situations (Levin, 1995). Educational partnerships can provide the means to increase the authenticity of school-based teaching and learning by providing opportunities for students to apply and evaluate their knowledge and skills in work environments. Originally, work experience programs were set up only for vocational and non-academic stream students. Increasingly, the public is demanding that similar opportunities be made available for *all* students. This trend has been recognized in post-secondary institutions where cooperative education programs, which blend school learning and work experience, are flourishing. A 1978 79 ACCESS survey showed that 21 post-secondary institutions across Canada had 13,782 students enrolled in cooperative education programs, while in 1996 97 112 institutions have 62,600 students enrolled in cooperative education programs. Admission to these programs is becoming extremely competitive. The trend in post-secondary institutions towards cooperative education, internship and Youth Entrepreneurship programs shows increased responsiveness to the need for higher education to integrate the practical with the theoretical.

Finally, changing demographics in Canada means there is increased pressure to spend tax dollars other than on education. David Foot (1996), University of Toronto demographer, reminds us that 1996 is the last year in Canada that there will be an increase in kindergarten enrollment. As the fertility rate continues to decrease and life expectancy increases, Foot (1996) predicts that the majority of people will want to see their tax dollars spent elsewhere, rather than on our education systems. School divisions in Alberta have recently been subject to damaging cuts in the provincial education budget and schools must raise money to make up for provincial shortfalls (Dawson, 1998). Changing times require creative ways of dealing with decreased national and provincial spending on education, and educational partnerships have long been recognized as an important strategy for dealing with decreased resources in education.

School-Business Partnerships in Rocky View School Division

As Canada's economic future becomes more directly linked to global competitiveness and the education and training of our young people, educational partnerships are becoming more important than ever. Schools can no longer work in isolation and ensure a successful experience for today's students - the leaders of tomorrow. Through educational partnership programs, students can learn about the realities of work and develop some of the leadership and citizenship skills necessary to make the successful transition from school to their chosen career. Students can

also enrich their education through the many human resources available in business, industry and the community. Subsequent sections of this paper report on a case study of school-business partnerships in Rocky View School Division (RVSD) (http://www.rockyview.ab.ca). RVSD is the sixth largest school division in Alberta, surrounds Calgary on three sides, and includes schools in both rural and urban settings. RVSD's vision for school-business partnerships is: *"All RVSD schools are involved in mutually beneficial relationships with businesses and communities to enhance learning opportunities"*. Partnerships and linkages between RVSD schools and Rocky View communities and businesses have been around for many years, and have enriched student programs by providing expertise, financial assistance and opportunities for learning outside of classroom walls. Colleen Brownlee, Superintendent of Schools, invites all businesses to find out about partnerships and what they do in Rocky View School Division. "No matter how big or small, we feel there is a match we can make for you. We want to enrich your life as a business, as well as enrich the lives of our students" (Hutchinson & Gladstone, 1997).

Characteristics of Educational Partnerships

Bloom (1995) defines school-business partnerships as mutually beneficial relationships between educators and employers that are designed to enhance learning for students and other learners. These partnerships may involve other education stakeholders as partners, including students, employees, parents, communities, labor, and government organizations. School-business partnerships can vary considerably, and range from single-school single-business partnerships, to broad collaborations that involve school boards, colleges and universities.

RVSD believes the keys to a successful school-business partnership are enthusiasm, commitment to shared goals, and good communication. Partners must commit to the central ingredient of a partnership, which is a direct and measurable learning benefit to students. A lack of observable learning benefits to students means the relationship is a business deal, not an educational partnership. Prospective partners, both schools and businesses, must first determine internal interest in forming an educational partnership and define their expected contributions and outcomes. Educational partnerships should also reflect the needs of the primary stakeholders: student needs, school priorities, company priorities and community needs. Common characteristics of successful educational partnerships include, but are not limited to:

1. Establishing a Divisional Partnership Policy (see Alberta School Boards Association, 1997)
2. Shared knowledge and expertise
3. Joint planning and goal setting (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 1992; O'Connor & Allen, 1996)
4. Orientation and training sessions for volunteers
5. Consistent evaluation and feedback with participants
6. Employees of both partners are informed about the partnership
7. Continuous improvement of the partnership

RVSD has invested in many educational partnerships that combine schools and or businesses in multi-level and multi-faceted collaborations that involve the whole community. For example, NOVA Gas Transmission has been partnered with two RVSD high schools in Airdrie, Alberta for a number of years. Their partnership includes the sharing of human resources to enhance career awareness and development and promote employability skills and lifelong learning. NOVA fosters a climate that supports and promotes partnership throughout the community, and has recently announced their support for the new Virtual School in Airdrie. Another example of a multi-level partnership is that between RVSD and First Calgary Savings and Credit Union (http://www.1stcalgary.com). First Calgary has led the development of resources available to all RVSD schools. For example, the "Grandparent Volunteer Program" (jointly developed with Calgary Board of Education http://cbe.ab.ca and Calgary Catholic School District http://crcssd1.calgary.ab.ca) which involves tapping into the love, expertise, time, and energy that seniors have to share with school children (Craven, Coburn, & Barton, 1996). First Calgary also published the "Trivia Challenge", co-authored by Muriel Clayton Middle School (http://rockyview1.rockyview.ab.ca/mclayton) students and a local historian, which is a game with age-appropriate math, banking, history and general knowledge questions based on the local area.

Establishing School-Business Partnerships

Educators need to lead the development process, and be creative in establishing partnerships. RVSD takes the following steps to assist schools in making partnerships successful joint ventures:

1. Inform colleagues about the potential partnership and assess their interests.
2. Obtain specific commitments and resources.
3. Complete an organization or school profile outlining the needs and expectations of the organization or school. This profile plays an integral role in matching partners.
4. Assign someone to coordinate the partnership by selecting an individual with the ability, interest and enthusiasm needed to ensure success.
5. Involve students in the planning and ongoing discussions about the partnership.
6. Discuss priorities, needs, and interests during initial meetings. Establish a clear direction for the partnership early in the process.
7. Document a short list of priority statements or objectives for the first year of the program.
8. Meet regularly with partners to assess the strength of the program and to maintain constant communication.
9. Perform a formal annual evaluation of the partnership, and use this information for future planning (Otterbourg & Adams, 1991).

Partnership Activities

Educators and business representatives should discuss the variety of activities in which they will participate, as well as the mutual benefits of their collaboration. In O'Connor and Allen's (1997) National Overview of Partnership Practice survey, respondents indicated that they believe partnerships best benefit their organization by enhancing community linkages, assisting with school-to-work transitions, providing distinct school and business advantages, and improving employee morale. The following section lists example partnership activities and school-to-work transition programs which potential partners may be interested in pursuing for mutual benefit. Educational partners must work together to identify the desired mutual benefits and strategies for formal evaluation of the outcomes of the partnership.

- *Shared Computer-based Projects*

Students might complete volunteer or paid computer-based projects for a business or organization, such as software development, data analysis or advertising. A business might use the school computer facilities to train employees.

- *Reading and Math Programs*

Teachers might offer literacy or numeracy programs in the workplace for employees to upgrade basic skills. Business partners might be involved one-on-one with students to practice writing, reading or math skills.

- *Technical Training*

Organizations or schools might offer training opportunities in accounting, computerized bookkeeping, on-line research and other areas where technology is being used.

- *Guest Speakers*

Business employees, community artisans, and government employees might come to class to share interests, knowledge and skills or speak to students about career prospects. Teachers might offer lunch hour talks and workshops on a variety of educational topics of interest.

- *Displaying and publishing student work*

Schools and organizations might work together to conduct art exhibits, music and drama presentations, science fairs, poster contests or writing/speaking contests.

- *Extra-curricular Connections*

Business employees might coach extra-curricular sports, play music with the school band, or organize a tournament or fine arts festival with the teachers or students.

- *Co-op/Work Experience Placements, and Job Shadowing*

Work experience programs bring bright enthusiastic, creative, productive students into the workplace, and students can obtain credits needed for graduation. A student might shadow an employee in the workplace to become familiar with that employee's occupation, or a business partner might shadow a teacher or a student for a day at school.

- *Registered Apprenticeship Programs*

Secondary students can be enrolled both as full-time high school students and registered apprentices under the Apprenticeship and Tradesman Qualifications Act. Their apprenticeship work outside of school can be credited towards their high school diploma.

- *Career and Technology Studies(CTS)*

This new Alberta provincial curriculum allows businesses and teachers to plan learning modules together for students in areas such as tourism, business, technology and trades. Alberta Education currently offers more than one hundred and fifty modules for students to choose from, ranging from forestry to photography to culinary arts.

- *Educator and Employee Workshops*

Schools and businesses can provide seminars for each other on various topics of mutual interest. Business partners and schools might also share professional development days.

Successful RVSD Educational Partnerships

Educational partnerships can yield a variety of learning benefits to students, schools and the community. Appropriately, the largest group of beneficiaries should be the students. However, teachers, educational administrators, and community members can also benefit from participation. The following section organizes some specific examples of successful educational partnerships in RVSD into three sections: 1) Benefits to students, 2) Benefits to Schools, and 3) Benefits to Business/Community Organizations. Each of the examples are worthy of an article on their own. In this brief sampling, our intent is to provide a broad overview of ways in which schools and businesses can participate in mutually beneficial partnerships, and provide anecdotal evidence for the contribution of school-business links to greater learning opportunities for our future citizens.

Benefits to Students

1. *Partnerships with business, industry and or community organizations increase student motivation for learning by providing authentic reasons to do good work.*

Business people are not *only* concerned with student's marks on achievement tests. For example, three RVSD schools have an art partnership with IKON Office Solutions (http://www.ikon.com/) and each year student artwork is chosen and professionally framed for display in their head office. The work of student artists is celebrated at a yearly reception to which students, their parents and teachers, and IKON employees are invited. The qualitative benefits of this type of partnership become clear when students see their artwork displayed where adults work. When she saw her artwork published on IKON's Christmas cards, one of our grade 4 students commented, "*I must be an important person in the world*".

2. *Partnerships can provide enrichment opportunities beyond the school curriculum.*

Through a partnership with Alberta Environmental Protection http://www.gov.ab.ca/~env/, a grade five class in Banded Peak School became Bow Habitat Field Station Number 1. This pilot program, called "Fish In Schools (FINS): Raising to Release", supplied six Alberta classrooms with 100 rainbow trout eggs and equipment to raise trout to the fingerling stage for release. The major purpose of the program was to teach about the environmental conditions needed for a healthy trout habitat. Students benefited from having the responsibility for raising trout for release in Alberta. One of the expectations of this partnership was that students would share their learning with others in order to educate the broader community. As a result, Banded Peak students kept daily journals about their experiences with the project, created a web site (http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/bpeak/edge.html) that linked their PowerPoint presentations and HyperStudio stacks about their observations, conducted tours for parents and other educators and students, made public presentations about their trout, and published a newsletter for parents. Throughout the project, students had access to experts and specialists from Alberta Environmental

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Protection, developed confidence by presenting their work to adults and other students, and contributed new knowledge to the scientific community.

3. *Partnerships can encourage students to develop a better understanding of the private enterprise system and the community.*

Middle school students in Cochrane, Alberta, approached businesses in their community and offered to promote their products and services by creating advertising materials for the local newspaper. This partnership activity arose from a desire of the teacher to motivate students to combine their artwork, writing, and marketing creativity in authentic and beneficial ways for their community.Students offered this marketing service as part of their journalism and social studies investigations. Students produced advertising which the business could then pay to get published in the Cochrane newspaper.

Through partnership programs such as Job Shadowing (Gladstone, 1996), Work Experience (Alberta Education, 1996b), cooperative education, and workplace tours, students are given hands-on experience in the workplace and direct contact with career role models. After job shadowing, one of our students commented: *"I found the experience eye opening and wonderful. They were just so happy I was there because they are trying to show what they do for a living. I was formatting disks...I was being treated like an adult...they had total trust in me."* It was very motivating for this student to realize her skills were valued in the adult work world.

4. *Partnerships can increase awareness of desirable employability skills.*

The Employability Skills Portfolio process currently being used in five RVSD high schools has benefited hundreds of students. Students complete self-assessment activities based on the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Profile (http://www.eoa-hrdc.com/3519/docs/empskpf.htm), set skill development goals based on their results, save evidence of their skills and accomplishments, and create a personal portfolio. This process enables students to list their current skills and accomplishments as well as identify areas in which they need to further develop their skills and attributes. The Portfolio is used to help guide a student's high school career as well as to plan part-time employment choices to further develop skills and accomplishments needed for their desired career and/or post-secondary education. The Portfolios show evidence of students' accomplishments using examples of best writing, math, science, and social studies work, volunteering, sports accomplishments, and part-time employment experience. The process also builds self-esteem, helps students to better understand themselves and their capabilities, and demonstrates the linkages between school and future careers. This process has been published as "Creating Your Future: An Employability Skills Portfolio" (Hiebert & Tanner, 1995). Dr. Bryan Hiebert, President Canadian Guidance and Counseling Foundation and professor at the University of Calgary, conducted a thorough evaluation of the program that is helping in designing future career development programs in RVSD. Four other RVSD High Schools are operating successful Career Resource Centres (Depoe, Hiebert, & Gladstone, 1996) as a result of this pilot program with the Conference Board of Canada.

Benefits to Schools

1. *Partnerships can provide enriched curriculum, teaching and learning opportunities for entire schools.*

One of RVSDs newest schools, Banded Peak School http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/bpeak, benefits from its partnership with the Faculty of Education (http://external.educ.ucalgary.ca) at the University of Calgary (http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca). Through an annual Galileo Doctoral Fellowship awarded by the University of Calgary and funded by the Gallagher Educational Foundation, Banded Peak School and its Galileo Centre have benefited from having a full-time doctoral student on-site who offers professional development to teachers, conducts classroom-based research, and acts as a liaison with the Faculty of Education. Both the University of Calgary and Banded Peak School have benefited from the rich opportunities for graduate students and faculty to conduct action research in an innovative teaching and learning setting, and from the professional development opportunities offered to preservice teachers.

2. *Through partnerships, teachers can develop a better understanding of current employer expectations.*

The "Teachers in Business Summer Program", offered by oil companies like NOVA (http://www.nova.ca) and Imperial Oil (http://www.imperial.oil.com), provides summer positions to teachers based on proposals to work within their organization. The program has enabled teachers to maximize the benefits of school-business partnerships when they return to their school. While working in the company, the teacher has the opportunity to identify specific individuals and programs that would best fit with their students and curriculum, as well as to develop authentic images of current work environments. One RVSD teacher returned to her school and instituted compulsory computer classes because she realized how integrated computers are in the business environment.

3. *Partnerships provide a new arena for professional development of teachers.*

A technology training firm, New Horizons (http://www.newhorizons.com), is offering computer classes for teachers and staff at greatly reduced rates in RVSD schools. A clear benefit of this partnership is the increased opportunity for teachers to learn technology skills from professionals in the field. Another of our partners, NOVA, provides tickets for teachers from their partner schools to attend the Annual APEGGA Awards (Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta) (http://www.apegga.com/awards.htm), which gives science teachers an opportunity to meet with leaders in the science world.

4. *School-business partnerships can provide increased access to business facilities, equipment and resources.*

The Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation Resource Sharing Program (http://www.calg-edu-part-fnd.com) has provided many of our schools with ongoing donations of furniture and equipment, such as board tables, desks, chairs, and computers.

5. *Partnerships provide important marketing opportunities for our schools.*

Public schools have an increased need to showcase what they do, and businesses provide opportunities to share learning results with the community. Two great examples of this benefit are: 1) the fine arts exhibitions provided to businesses that showcase student work, and in some cases, give employees and students an opportunity to perform music and drama productions together, and 2) student work experience and summer employment placements which give business people the opportunity to work alongside high school students and develop a better awareness and understanding of the knowledge and skills these young people have to offer their community.

Benefits to Business/Community Organizations

1. *Business and community organizations benefit from partnerships that provide increased visibility, recognition and enhance their corporate image.*

In January 1998, IKON Office Solutions, along with the University of Calgary, Bloodhounds International Inc., the Gallagher Education Foundation, and the Galileo Centre at Banded Peak School http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/bpeak/galileo.html were honored for their business-education partnership with the **1998 Excellence Award in Professional Development** by the Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation (http://www.calg-edu-part-fnd.com). This award recognizes topnotch collaborative work done for the benefit of students. IKON has made a significant financial and human resource commitment to Banded Peak School, including the provision of a high end networked digital imaging system and setting up the school's computer server and network. IKON's Calgary Marketplace president gives his time to sit on the advisory council for the Galileo project, and two IKON employees are currently working with one of the school's project teachers to develop a technology training program to develop student experts who will lead technology integration efforts in the school. Garry Oelke, project manager for IKON professional services in Calgary, says that this Partnership with Banded Peak and the Galileo Centre is "an investment in the future" (IKONnow, 1998).

2. *Partnerships contribute to a well-trained workforce and the proactive sharing of required employability skills.*

A variety of businesses are funding and supporting student programs such as the Global Vision Junior Team Canada Trade Missions (http://www.globalvision.ca) which provide international travel opportunities for motivated RVSD students who represent their country and write reports about their experiences. Benefits to students

include getting international exposure and experience, and benefits to businesses include helping to train the future work force, sharing their expertise with students, and becoming more aware of the potential and promise of younger citizens.

3. *Increased employee satisfaction, morale and teamwork (Bloom, 1995).*

Partnerships also provide opportunities for business people to interact across the hierarchy. Through their involvement in school-business partnerships, employees often have increased opportunities to demonstrate their skills with diverse groups, including both CEOs and children.

4. *Partnerships encourage and promote a better understanding of the education system.*

As a result of creating personal connections and relationships through school-business partnerships, business people can become more aware of current educational issues, values, and goals, as well as develop productive working and communication relationships with today's youth. Two corporate trainers from IKON Office Solutions, who worked with elementary students from Banded Peak School to develop computer support skills, expressed admiration and enthusiasm for the student's ability to share their new expertise with IKON employees.

5. *Increased professional development opportunities for employees.*

Teachers can offer lunch-hour seminars to businesses on a variety of topics, such as: the new science curriculum, presentation and teaching skills, and how to get the most out of a parent-teacher interview. We have cited some examples of how schools can benefit from increased access to current technology and expertise. Just as often, businesses benefit from accessing the rich knowledge, skills, and resources that are resident in our schools and teaching faculty. For example, in some educational partnerships, the schools and teachers have better knowledge and skills about current technology than does a business in the community, and readily share their expertise.

6. *Access to school facilities and resources.*

Business meetings held in a partner's school ensure that participants are away from their phone and other distractions. Business partners might use the school gym for team building exercises, and in some cases, students in food preparation programs prepare their meals and snacks.

Issues and Dilemmas

Educational partnerships are a mutually beneficial strategy for providing students and business people with increased learning opportunities, dealing with reduced educational funding, and addressing a changing Canadian economy and employment situation. Although there can a variety of mutual benefits from school-business partnerships, there are also some issues and concerns that must be addressed to increase the chances of efficacy and success.

In order to increase the chances of a successful partnership, those who initiate the school-business link will have to convince a critical mass of people to become involved in order for the partnership to move beyond the pilot stage and gain momentum. Educators and industry partners already have very full schedules, and there is a need to convince those involved of the value for time investment. Some partners take 1-2 years to establish a working partnership, and it takes strong motivation and commitment to sustain interest during this process. Formal evaluations, strategies for tracking observable and peripheral learning benefits, and other measures of successful outcomes will help to convince skeptical parents and educators who may be hesitant about forming greater links with business. In addition to addressing possible stakeholder concerns, bottom line results will convince partners that their time is well invested.

When entering into a school-business partnership, it is important to reassure and remind educators and business people of the importance and value of their distinct roles in order to build a climate of trust. Both parties have to accept and value the school-business approach to providing extended learning experiences in order for the partnership to flourish. Business people need to respect the knowledge and experience that educators bring to the

school-to-work experience, and educators need to be open to and consider diverse business perspectives about the goals of education.

Educators may shy away from partnerships because of the risky nature of business. Partnerships come and go, and businesses go bankrupt. Rather than using this as a reason not to pursue a partnership, educators need to regard this as another life experience that is important for students to understand. Even if a business partner does go bankrupt, it is not necessarily a disaster for the partnership. The president of a company that did go bankrupt demonstrated his commitment and loyalty to a RVSD school by sticking with the partnership. He wanted the students to know that, "businesses may come and go, but I am still here, and I still have value to offer this school".

Partnerships are often created and operated through the efforts of highly committed individuals, and the results are gratifyingly positive (Bloom, 1995). However, a school-business partnership can be at risk if its sustainability depends on person-to-person relationships. Where an individual educator or business person has been the driving force in creating and sustaining a partnership, that individual's departure can severely undermine the effectiveness of the entire program (Bloom, 1995). There is increased recognition of the importance and need to institutionalize partnerships to reduce this risk. One of the ways that RVSD has chosen to address this risk, as well as deal with the huge workload of creating and organizing partnerships, was to create a Partnerships Coordinator position in order to train others in partnership development. As part of this mandate, the Partnerships coordinator worked together with NOVA Corporation to develop the "Rocky View School Business Partnership Video" (Hutchinson & Gladstone, 1997).

A dilemma that school divisions have to grapple with is defining the difference between a school-business partnership and the school division acting as a business. The Environics Research Group (1997) Focus Canada Report provides evidence that an overwhelming majority of Canadians support the idea of schools forming more links with business, but many are wary of advertising in the classroom. Advertising on school buses is something RVSD has been working towards for over two years with many public consultations. The main purpose of this partnership is to raise funds for the school division. Business may see this as a partnership, while RVSD sees this as strictly a financial, or business, deal. Educators have to clearly define for stakeholders what constitutes an educational partnership, and what is a business deal. In RVSD, potential partners are encouraged to make use of the Conference Board of Canada's Ethical Guidelines for Business-Education Partnerships (Bloom, 1995). The bottom line for RVSD: if there is no direct educational benefit to children, then the relationship is not an educational partnership.

Implications

In order for educational partnerships to contribute to a valuable and legitimate educational experience for our children, there has to be a direct and measurable impact on learning. We are convinced that educational partnerships can offer important benefits to students, schools, and the businesses, and therefore, benefit society at large both now and in the future. An additional benefit is that personal relationships are cultivated among and between professionals from schools and businesses, and educational partnerships make school and learning more personally relevant to children by impacting their future employment and education opportunities. We support the value of children doing "real work" and interacting with adults in meaningful ways. There is a need for joint planning about what is the partnership going to do and how it will bring together the best ideas from both organizations (i.e., as opposed to the school prescribing a project and going to business for a specific financial request).

In the second report on educational partnerships in Rocky View School Division, we will present a case study of the school-business partnerships that have contributed to the success of the Galileo Centre at Banded Peak School in Bragg Creek, Alberta. In this report we highlight the need for joint evaluation of the outcomes of an educational partnership (Otterbourg & Adams, 1991), and describe ways in which educators and stakeholders can work together to plan for the assessment and evaluation of a partnership.

Note

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A condensed version of this report was published as an article in January 1999 by the International Electronic Journal of Leadership in Learning - http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/

Gladstone, B., and Jacobsen, D. M. (1999). Educational Partnerships in Rockyview School Division, Part 1. *The International Electronic Journal of Leadership in Learning, 3* (1). [On-line]. Available: http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/volume3/gladstone.html

References

Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA). (1997). School-business partnerships (ASBA Policy Advisory Service 97-2). Calgary: Author.

Alberta Education. (1996a). Framework for enhancing business involvement in education. Edmonton: Alberta Education Curriculum Standards Branch.

Alberta Education. (1996b) Education programs and services off-campus education. [On-line]. Available: http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/pol%2Dplan/polregs/143.htm

Bloom, M.R. (1995). Ethical guidelines for business-education partnerships. (National Business and Education Centre Report 153-95). Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.

Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation. (1996). Employability skills: Creating my future. Nelson: Calgary, AB.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce. (1992). Focus 2000: Business-education partnerships, your planning guide. Don Mills: CCH Canadian Ltd.

Conference Board of Canada. (1992). Employability skills profile. Corporate Council on Education, Conference Board of Canada. [On-line]. Available: http://www.eoa-hrdc.com/3519/docs/empskpf.htm

Craven, J., Coburn, P., & Barton, L. (1996). The grandparents' volunteer program: A handbook to help get started. Calgary: Calgary Board of Education and First Calgary Savings and Credit Union.

Dawson, C. (1998). Businesses defend ties to schools. Calgary Herald cover story, March 29, 1998. [Online] Available: http://www.calgaryherald.com/services/archives.html

Depoe, L., Hiebert, B., & Gladstone, B. (1996). Career resource centre handbook. Calgary: Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation and Human Resources Development Canada.

DeBruyn, R.L., Kremer, M. L., Orth, L., Rickabaugh, R., Winters, M. L., Wright, W., & Yunk, D.C. (1996). Career education must start early. Superintendents Only, 3 (7), 8-9.

Environics Research Group. (September, 1997). "Back to School" could mean "Back to Business" in Canada. Environics Focus Canada Report, education survey.

Environics Research Group. (1996). Focus Canada Report 1996.

Foot, D. K. (1996). Boom, bust and echo: How to profit from the coming demographic shift. Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter & Ross.

Gladstone, B. (1996). Job shadowing: training and exploration for career planning. Rocky View School Division No. 41.

Goodlad, J. I., & McMannon, T. J., Eds. (1997). The public purpose of education and schooling. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Hiebert, B., & Tanner, G. (1995). Student employability skills portfolio project evaluation report. Calgary: Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation.

Hutchinson J., & Gladstone, B. (1997). Rocky View School business partnership video. (Produced by the Rocky View School Division and NOVA Corporation. Available from the Rocky View School Division.)

IKONnow. (1998, February 17). IKON co-winner of educators' award. IKONnow, 2 (2).

Levin, B. (1995). How can schools respond to changes in work? Paper presented at the Canadian Vocational Association Research Colloquium, Moncton, N.B. April 2-4. (email:levin *a* cc.umanitoba.ca)

O'Connor, J., and Allen, R. (1997). Full summary of survey findings regarding feasibility of a Canadian National Partners in Education Centre. Prepared for Human Resources Development Canada by the Industry-Education Council of Hamilton-Wentworth in consultation with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth.

O'Connor, J., & Allen, R. (1996). How to engage your community in partnerships in education: A Canadian resource guide for educators and employers. Hamilton-Wentworth: Industry Educational Council.

Otterbourg, S., & Adams, D. (1991). Partnerships in education: Measuring their success. Ellenton: Infomedia.

Statistics Canada. (1998). 1996 Census: Education, mobility and migration, April 14, 1998. [On-line]. Available: http: www.statcan.ca Daily English 980414 d980414.htm

Authorship Information

Brenda Gladstone is the general manager for the Galileo Educational Network Association - Email: bgladstone *a* home.com, URL: http: www.galileo.org

Dr. D. Michele Jacobsen is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. Email: dmjacobs *a* acs.ucalgary.ca, URL: http: www.acs.ucalgary.ca ~dmjacobs